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CONGRESS APPROVES FUNDING FOR F-22 AIRCRAFT

Strong Support Shown for Additional Connecticut Defense Programs

U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) announced this afternoon that the House of Representatives passed the Conference Report for H.R. 4576, the Defense Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2001, by a vote of 367-58. The bill fully funds the President's request for approximately \$3.8 billion for procurement and additional research and development for the F-22 Raptor aircraft. The bill also brings additional funding that will help strengthen the Connecticut defense industry's manufacturing base.

"Recently, we have faced downsizing, and we have faced restructuring within the Connecticut defense industry, but today I am pleased to be able to talk about new engine construction for Pratt & Whitney," said Larson. "This means a great deal to the working people of this area, as well as our national defense."

In addition to pushing the F-22 program forward, Larson had also worked to convince House committee members to include \$47.8 million to begin refitting several Air National Guard F-16 squadrons with new, more modern Pratt & Whitney-built engines. "This is just the beginning of what we hope will be an ongoing refit program," Larson added.

Among other items that are good news for the East Hartford-based Pratt & Whitney, the bill also includes \$2.1 billion to build 10 new F-22 Raptor and \$400 million to buy five new F-15 Eagle fighters. Each of these planes are powered by two Pratt & Whitney engines. Finally, the bill includes \$2.2 billion for 12 new C-17 transport aircraft, each powered by four Pratt-made engines, and \$73.1 million to upgrade F-15 engines that are currently in service.

"This is more than just good news for Pratt, however. There is great news throughout the District, and throughout the state, as we work to stabilize and revitalize Connecticut's manufacturing industrial base," said Larson, referring to additional programs he worked to have included in the bill.

Around the First Congressional District, Chandler Evans Control Systems in West Hartford received \$4.8 million for several Army and Air Force research and development programs, as

well as a share of \$117 million to upgrade the Army's fleet of CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

Hamilton Sunstrand received \$4 million to continue research and development on a new composite propeller design and the Ensign Bickford Company, which is in the Sixth District, received \$13.7 million for additional anti-personnel device breaching systems they produce for the Marine Corps.

Elsewhere in the state, Sikorsky and Electric Boat programs also fared well in the bill, which included \$614 million for research and development of the Comanche next generation helicopter program, over \$380 million for 35 Black Hawk helicopters, \$37.8 million to convert old SSBN submarines to a new SSGN configuration, and \$1.2 billion to procure a new NSSN submarine.

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Congressman Larson is a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

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